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BOISE, Idaho, Nov. 5 — Senator Frank Church, whose 24-year career in the Senate ended in defeat early this morning for want of 4,316 votes, stood in his backyard amid falling amber leaves today and conceded the election.

"The conservatives are in charge now," Mr. Church said softly to a small group of bleary-eyed supporters. "This is what they wanted, and the people have given it to them."

Bolstered by the Ronald Reagan landslide, a surge of statewide conservatism and a group of right-wing organizations that poured thousands of dollars into Idaho, Representative Stephen D. Symms, 42 years old, a four-term conservative Republican, defeated Mr. Church, the 56-year-old liberal chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with 49.7 percent of the vote to 48.7. Larry

Fullmer, the Libertarian candidate, a businessman from Pocatello, received 1.6 percent of the vote.

The race was the longest and most expensive political campaign in Idaho's history. Senator Church and Representative Symms spent a total of almost \$4 million. Mr. Church spent \$360,000 in his 1974 re-election campaign.

Both sides attributed Mr. Symms' squeaky victory to the heavy turnout for Mr. Reagan, who captured about 76 percent of the popular vote here. "After 70 percent, the Reagan vote was the decisive factor — even in this ticket-splitting state," said Forrest Church, one of the Senator's sons.

J. Phil Reberger, Mr. Symms' campaign manager, agreed but added that the voters' "message went far beyond Jimmy Carter."

"People voted their pocketbooks," he said. "They were tired of printing-press

money, high interest rates and inflation, they thought it was time for a change in the Congress."

Mr. Church attributed his defeat in part to a pre-election weekend blitz by conservative groups. Antiabortionists distributed pamphlets urging his defeat at churches. And conservative groups blanketed television and newspapers with anti-Church advertising.

Mr. Church was forced to open his re-election bid in January, 1979, after several of these groups designated him and five of his liberal colleagues for defeat. For 21 months, he was under an incessant barrage from, among others, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, which spent about \$278,000 on advertising here. Much of the advertising, Church supporters contended, distorted Mr. Church's record.

Mr. Reberger dismissed Mr. Church's charges that Mr. Symms and his allies

had waged the dirtiest campaign in state history.

"The martyr role is a favorite of his," he said of Mr. Church. "Anytime you talked about his record, he claimed it was a dirty campaign."

Mr. Church, a moderate liberal, has long been something of an anomaly in Idaho, one of the most conservative states. The first Democrat to be elected to the Senate from Idaho, Mr. Church was re-elected three times even though he frequently took stands that were unpopular at home, such as his opposition to the war in Vietnam. Some analysts thought that the Reagan landslide had finally caused Mr. Church's precarious political lifestyle to catch up with him.

Mr. Church mourned the defeat of many liberal Democratic colleagues.

"But it's somewhat consoling," he said today, "to go out in such good company."